

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The City of Walnut Creek is the lead agency and is preparing an Environmental Impact Report for the project identified below. We are requesting comments from your agency on the scope and content of this Environmental Impact Report.

Project Title: **City of Walnut Creek General Plan Update**

The project description, project location and probable environmental effects are contained in the attached Initial Study.

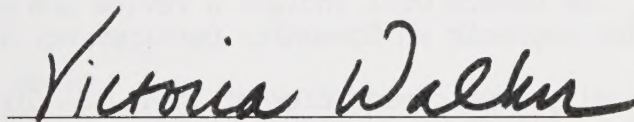
Please send your response within 30 days after receiving this notice. Your response should be directed to:

Victoria Walker, Associate Planner
Community Development Department
City of Walnut Creek
P.O. Box 8039
1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek CA 94596

(if by U.S. Mail)

(if by hand or commercial delivery)

September 3, 1992



Victoria Walker
Associate Planner
(510) 943-5834

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INITIAL STUDY
(ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM)

(To be completed pursuant to City of Walnut Creek Environmental Guidelines, Section 1.6)

CITY OF WALNUT CREEK

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

INITIAL STUDY

PROJECT TITLE: General Plan Revision

WORK ORDER NO: 7071

PREPARED BY: Robert Schubert

DATE: June 17, 1992

REVIEWED BY: Paul Richardson

DATE: June 22, 1992

I. PROJECT INFORMATION:

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of an update of the 1989 General Plan including a revised growth limitation program and implementing ordinances and rezonings. The purpose of the project is to amend the General Plan using as a basic model the City of Newport Beach General Plan and Traffic Phasing Ordinance which contain growth management policies designed to ensure that traffic does not exceed the level of service desired by the City. The revised General Plan will guide the City's growth and development to the year 2010.

The Walnut Creek General Plan consists of five major elements: Community Development, Housing, Transportation, Community Resources and Public Health and Safety. The update will include a review and evaluation of all of the elements, with particular emphasis on Community Development, Transportation and Housing.

The Community Development Element is divided into five subelements: Residential, Commercial, City Design, Growth Management and Regional Planning. The Growth Limitation Subelement will be completely rewritten to correspond to the new growth limitation method used for the General Plan. It will also require revisions in the performance standards to meet Measure C requirements (Measure C provides a source of revenue for transportation improvements within Contra Costa County). The Residential and Commercial Subelements will be revised to reflect changes in commercial floor area ratios (FARs), residential densities and height limits.

The Transportation Element is divided into five subelements: Roadways, Transit and TSM, Pedestrian Systems, and Bikeways. It seems likely that the only major revisions will be made to the Roadways Subelement. As part of the initial planning studies, a comprehensive traffic analysis will be performed. This will compare existing conditions with General Plan buildout conditions and will establish acceptable buildout intersection levels of service for the City. Additional roadway improvements beyond those identified in the 1989 General Plan will be identified. These roadway improvements will be evaluated and timed for construction.

The policies and background sections of the Housing Element will be revised to

reflect changes to the residential densities and any other residential policies which the City Council may revise or add.

2. PROJECT LOCATION

The City's planning area encompasses approximately 30.8 square miles. The boundary generally follows the City's current sphere of influence line, except for the east side, where the line encompasses private grazing lands.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT SITE

The City is about 94% built out. About 3,000 acres of the planning area is public open space; this area is within Walnut Creek City limits.

4. CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

The City is surrounded on three sides by either county land or adjacent cities - Concord and Pleasant Hill to the north and Lafayette to the west. To the east are grazing lands and Mt. Diablo State Park.

5. GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION AND ZONING

Currently there are seven residential land use categories, five commercial categories, a public/semi-public category and an open space/recreation category. Minor changes to these categories may occur during the General Plan revision. In addition, changes may be made to the land use designations of particular sites. If the General Plan densities are revised, it will be necessary to make changes to the existing zoning districts and to rezone properties consistent with the new densities.

II. AGENCIES CONSULTED:

	YES	NO
Regional Water Quality Control Board		X
State Department of Public Health		X
Bay Area Air Quality Maintenance District		X
Metropolitan Transportation Commission		X
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency		X
State Department of Fish & Game		X
Contra Costa County Flood Control District		X
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District		X
Contra Costa County Water District		X
Contra Costa County Consolidated Fire Dist.		X
Contra Costa County Health Services Division		X
East Bay Municipal Utility District		X
Cal Trans		X
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers		X
(Other) _____		

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

(Please provide explanations for all responses and cite sources. Mitigation measures should be identified for each significant impact.)

Yes Maybe No

A. **Earth.** Will the proposal result in:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Unstable earth conditions or changes in geologic substructures? | | | X |
| 2. Disruptions, displacements, compaction or overcovering of the soil? | X | | |
| 3. Change in topography or ground surface relief features? | X | | |
| 4. Construction on slopes of 15% or greater? | | X | |
| 5. The destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features? | | | X |
| 6. Any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site? | | | X |
| 7. Changes in deposition or erosion of beach sands, or changes in siltation, deposition or erosion which may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed of the ocean or any bay, inlet or lake? | | | X |
| 8. Exposure of people or property to geologic hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, ground failure, or similar hazards? | | X | |
| 9. The construction of buildings in a fault management studies zone? | | | X |

B. **Air.** Will the proposal result in:

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Substantial air emissions or deterioration of ambient air quality? | | X | |
| 2. The creation of objectionable odors? | | | X |
| 3. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally? | | | X |
| 4. Construction or alteration of a facility within one-fourth of a mile of a school which might emit | | | X |

hazardous air emissions? If Yes, school district must be consulted and must be given written notification of the project not less than 30 days prior to approval of EIR or Negative Declaration (Pub. Res. Code Subsection 21151.4).

C. Water. Will the proposal result in:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements, in either marine or fresh waters? | X |
| 2. Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface water runoff? | X |
| 3. Alterations to the course or flow of flood waters? | X |
| 4. Discharge into surface waters, or in any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity? | X |
| 5. Alteration of the direction or rate of flow of ground waters? | X |
| 6. Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations? | X |
| 7. Substantial reduction in the amount of water otherwise available for public water supplies? | X |
| 8. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding or tidal waves? | X |
| 9. Buildings or structures located in a flood zone as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency? If so, what zone? | X |

D. Plant Life. Will the proposal result in:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Change in the diversity of species, or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)? | X |
| 2. Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of plants? | X |
| 3. Introduction of new species of plants into an | X |

area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 4. | The removal or transplanting of any mature trees covered under the Tree Preservation Ordinance? | | X |
| 5. | A project located in or near an area with vegetation having a high fire potential? | X | |

E. **Animal Life.** Will the proposal result in:

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1. | Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds, land animals including reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms or insects)? | | X |
| 2. | Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of animals? | | X |
| 3. | Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals? | | X |
| 4. | Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat? | | X |

F. **Noise.** Will the proposal result in:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Increases in existing noise levels? | X |
| 2. | Exposure of people to severe noise levels? | X |

G. Light and Glare. Will the proposal produce new light or glare?	X
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H. Land Use. Will the proposal result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area?	X
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I. **Natural Resources.** Will the proposal result in:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | An increase in the rate of use of any natural resources? | X |
| 2. | Substantial depletion of any nonrenewable natural resource? | X |

J. **Risk of Upset.** Will the proposal involve:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | A risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals or | X |
|----|---|---|

radiation) in the event of an accident or upset conditions?

- | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|
| 2. | Possible interference with an emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan? | | | X |
| K. | Population. Will the proposal alter the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? | X | | |
| L. | Housing. Will the proposal affect existing housing, or create a demand for additional housing? | | X | |
| M. | Transportation/Circulation. Will the proposal result in: | | | |
| 1. | Generation of substantial additional vehicular movement? | | X | |
| 2. | Effects on existing parking facilities, or demand for new parking? | | X | |
| 3. | Substantial impact upon existing transportation and traffic systems? | | X | |
| 4. | Alterations to present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods? | | | X |
| 5. | Alterations to waterborne, rail or air traffic? | | X | |
| 6. | Increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians? | | | X |
| N. | Public Services. Will the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: | | | |
| 1. | Fire Protection? | | X | |
| 2. | Police Protection? | | X | |
| 3. | Schools? | | X | |
| 4. | Parks or other recreational facilities? | | X | |

5. Maintenance of public facilities, including roads? X

6. Other governmental services? X

O. **Energy.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Use of substantial amounts of fuel or energy? X

2. Substantial increase in demand upon existing sources of energy, or require the development of new sources of energy? X

P. **Utilities.** Will the proposal result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations to the following utilities?

1. Power or natural gas? X

2. Communications systems? X

3. Water? X

4. Sewer or septic tanks? X

5. Storm water drainage? X

6. Solid waste & disposal? X

Q. **Human Health.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard (excluding mental health)? X

2. Exposure of people to potential health hazards? X

R. **Visual Impacts.** Will the proposal result in:

1. The obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public? X

2. The creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view? X

3. A design that is incompatible with surrounding uses and structures? X

4. Will the project be visible from any designated scenic highways? X
5. Construction of buildings or structures in excess of three stories? X

S. Recreation. Will the proposal result in an impact upon the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities? X

T. Cultural Resources.

1. Will the proposal result in the alteration of, or the destruction of, a prehistoric or historic archaeological site? X
2. Will the proposal result in adverse physical or aesthetic effects to a prehistoric or historic building, structure, or object? X
3. Does the proposal have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values? X

U. Mandatory Findings of Significance.

1. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? X
2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one which occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future.) X
3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may impact on two or more separate resources where the impact on each resource is relatively small, but where the effect of the total of those impacts on the environment is significant.) X

4. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? X

V. EIR Required by Statute.

1. Does the project involve construction of any facility which burns municipal waste or refuse-derived fuel? NOTE: If the answer is yes, then an EIR must be prepared and certified under Public Resources Code Subsection 21151.2 (a) unless subsections (b) and (c) make that section inapplicable. X

IV. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- A. Earth - Development of property under the revised General Plan will result in overcovering of the soil and changes in topography. It may also involve construction on slopes greater than 15% and exposure of people or property to geologic hazards. Policies and implementation measures related to these issues are included in the existing General Plan.

Mitigation Measures: Grading and seismic impacts are largely localized and are project specific. Specific mitigation measures will be required as conditions of approval for individual projects.

- B. Air Pollution - Air Pollution may increase as a result of increased growth and traffic.

Mitigation Measures: The impact of traffic generated by the plan will be analyzed in the EIR for its effect on air quality.

- C. Water - Development under the General Plan may result in changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate of surface water runoff. The Safety Element of the existing General Plan discusses, in qualitative terms, hydrology and drainage considerations including capacity.

Mitigation Measures: Water impacts are largely localized and are project specific. Specific mitigation measures will be required as conditions of approval for individual projects.

- D. Plant Life - Projects may be located in or near an area with vegetation having a high fire potential.

Mitigation Measures: Vegetation impacts are largely localized and are project specific. Specific mitigation measures will be required as conditions of approval for individual projects.

- E. Noise - Noise may increase as a result of increased growth and traffic.

Mitigation Measures: The EIR will address relevant land use concerns based on the

analysis of noise impacts created by the revised General Plan.

- F. Light and Glare - Projects may produce new light and glare.

Mitigation Measures: Light and glare impacts are largely localized and are project specific. Specific mitigation measures will be required as conditions of approval for individual projects.

- G. Land Use - Changes may be made to the land use designations of particular sites. Rezoning may be required to be consistent with any changes to land use designations on particular sites.

Mitigation Measures: Mitigations proposed in the EIR will be area specific and examined relative to alternative land use designations and policy considerations.

- H. Natural Resources - Projects may increase the rate of use of natural resources.

Mitigation Measures: Natural resource impacts are largely localized and are project specific. Specific mitigation measures will be required as conditions of approval for individual projects.

- I. Population and Housing - Residential densities and other residential policies affecting population growth may be revised.

Mitigation Measures: The EIR will evaluate the impacts of any changes in housing and population growth.

- J. Transportation/Circulation - The Transportation Authority Central County Traffic Model will be used as the basis for the General Plan traffic impact analysis. The traffic model will analyze alternative development scenarios and their impacts on intersection levels of service citywide. In addition, the roadway improvements identified in the existing General Plan will be reviewed to see if any additional improvements should be considered. If any additional improvements are warranted, they will be analyzed and considered as part of the General Plan traffic analysis.

Mitigation Measures: Based upon the intersection level of service analysis provided by the City, the EIR will discuss traffic impacts of the General Plan. Local and regional growth will be discussed as well as any traffic and transportation improvements proposed in the General Plan.

- K. Public Services and Utilities - Service levels and utilities may be affected by revisions to the General Plan.

Mitigation Measures: Service level capacity, growth inducing improvements and alternatives will be assessed in the EIR.

- L. Visual Impact - Major visual issues are the I-680 Corridor and preservation of ridgeline views. Also the Core Area development will create visual effect on the built environment.

Mitigation Measures: Various sections of the General Plan will discuss man made and natural visual elements. The EIR will evaluate the effect of development policies on the preservation of existing scenic resources.

- M. Cumulative Impacts - The General Plan is a development guidance document which will manage growth over the next 17 years (i.e., to the year 2010).

Mitigation Measures: The EIR will assess the impacts of growth and its effects as created by the proposed General Plan.

V. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

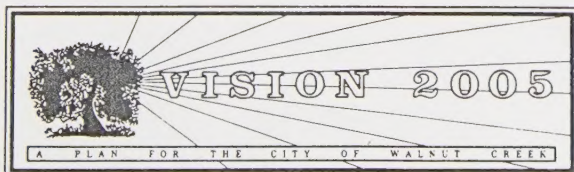
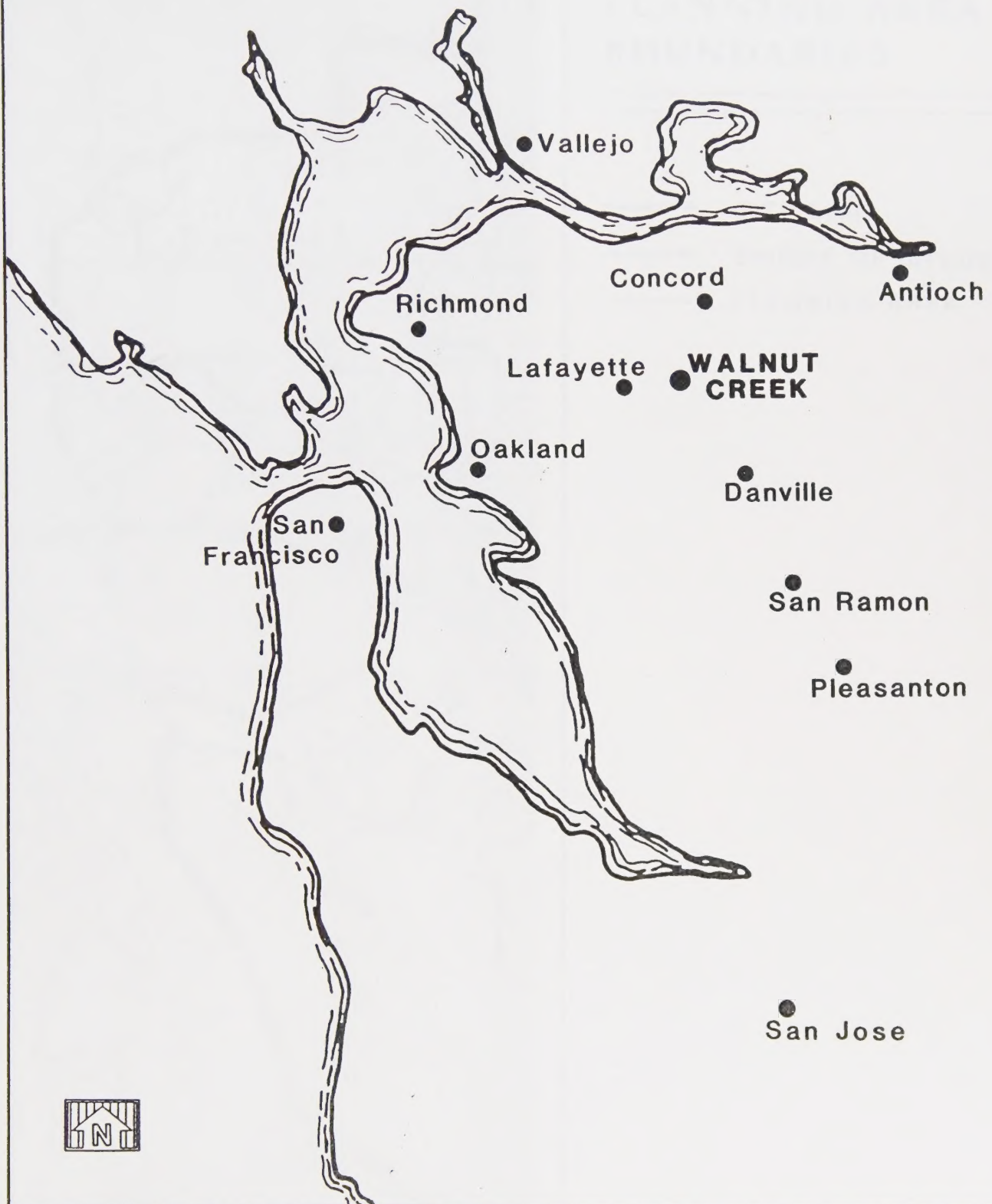
I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. []

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED. []

I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required. [X]

I find that State Statute > requires that an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT be prepared and certified. []

FIGURE 1-1



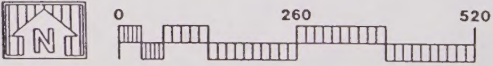
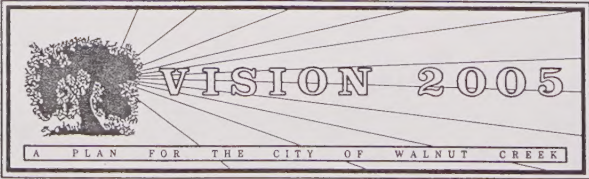
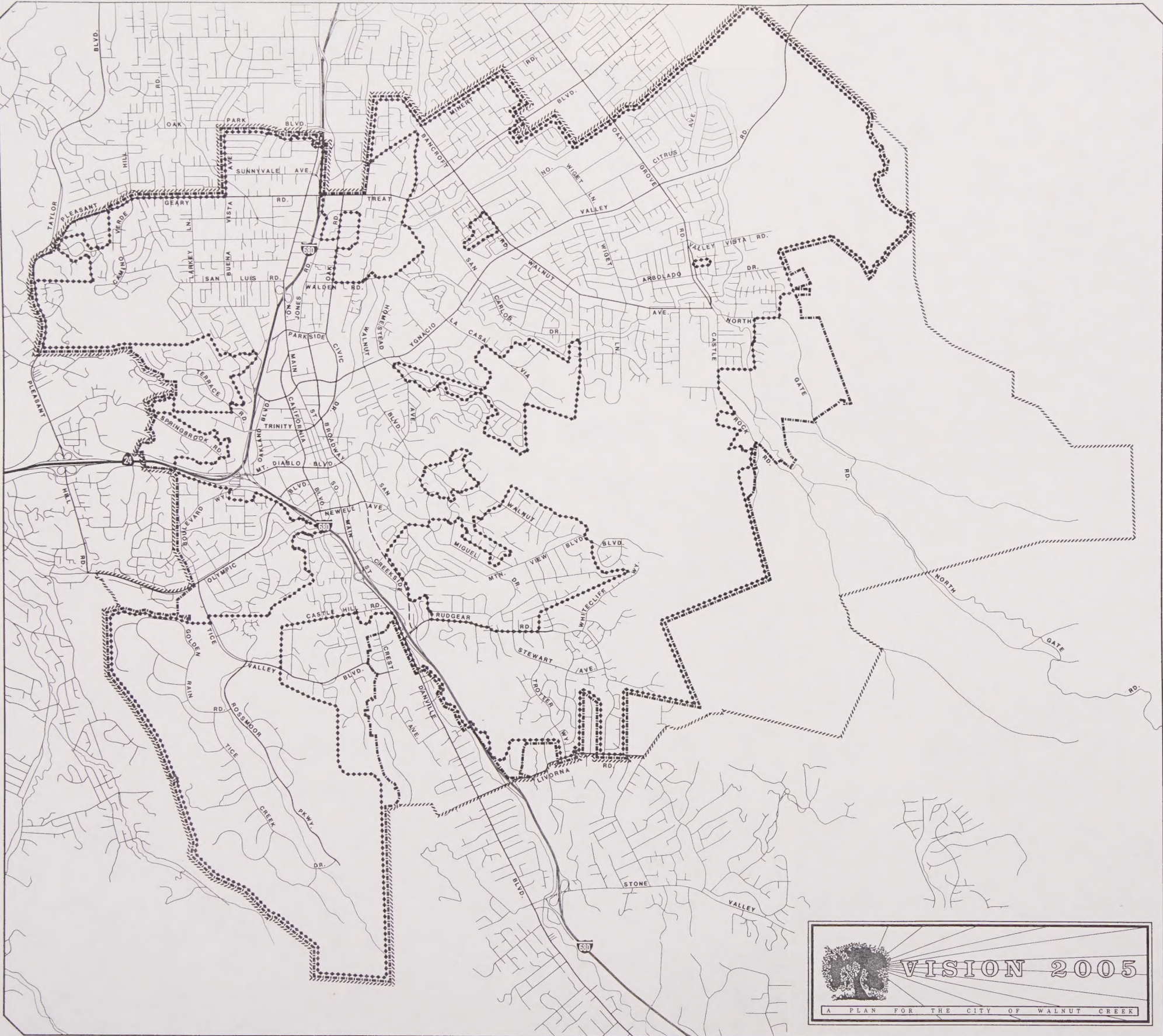
REGIONAL LOCATION MAP



FIGURE 1-2

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

- ◆◆◆◆◆ CITY LIMIT
- ▬▬▬▬▬ SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- ▨▨▨▨▨ PLANNING AREA



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